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82D CONGRESS, 1st Session | SENATE | REPORT No. 667

WILLEM SMITS

AUGUST 20 (legislative day, AUGUST 1), 1951.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MCCARRAN, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 982]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 982) for the relief of Willem Smits, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to grant the status of permanent residence in the United States to Willem Smits. The bill provides for an appropriate quota deduction and for the payment of the required visa fee and head tax.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The beneficiary of the bill is a 22-year-old native and citizen of the Netherlands who last entered the United States as a seaman on November 30, 1947. He failed to depart with his boat and subsequently enlisted in the United States Navy at Atlanta, Ga., on April 22, 1948, claiming to be a native-born citizen. On January 28, 1949, he was discharged due to the fact that he was not a United States citizen.

Congressman Henderson Lanham, the author of the bill, appeared before a subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and made the following statement in support of the bill:

Thank you so much for the courtesy extended me of appearing in person on behalf of Willem Smits before your subcommittee this morning. I am especially interested in Willem Smits and want to emphasize a portion of a letter written by Mr. Charles L. Looney, deputy clerk of the superior court of my home county, as follows:

"One thing I wish to particularly remind you of, and to ask that you call it to the special attention of the committee, is the services Willem rendered our armed services in Europe. When I first encountered him he was a displaced laborer in Zirl, Austria, although little more than a boy. I was serving as platoon sergeant with the One Hundred and Third Infantry Division, Three Hundred and Twenty-eighth Combat Engineer Battalion, Company C. Willem rendered us invaluable service in acting as an interpreter in connection with questioning prisoners, but his most valuable contribution was his assistance in locating mine fields and ammunition dumps, and he undoubtedly was directly instrumental in saving the lives of American soldiers; certainly this should be given especial weight by the committee, and by the Congress in the consideration of your bill."

It is so eloquent of the aid rendered by Smits to the American boys in Germany that I wanted to call it to your personal attention. If this boy is sent back to Holland, he will, no doubt, be punished as a draft dodger or the equivalent under the laws of his country. In view of his great service to America and his fine record since he has been living here, I would regret very much to see him go back to his native country under the circumstances.

There is no doubt of it but that he would make a splendid citizen and he assures me that he stands ready to serve again in the Army or Navy of our country if he is permitted to become a citizen.

Sincerely yours,

HENDERSON LANHAM.

In addition, Congressman Lanham submitted the following documents in connection with the case:

ROME, GA., *June 1, 1951.*

Hon. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR: You are familiar, of course, with my connection with Willem Smits to the extent of his close association with me, but I should like to briefly remind you of some of the facts for use in connection with the coming hearing on your bill for his relief, House Resolution No. 982.

You will recall that I first met him during the latter part of the war in Europe, and that when he came to this country in December 1947 he came to Rome and lived with me until joining the Navy. After his discharge from the naval service he again returned to Rome, and has been living with me and my family since then; at present he is residing in the home of my mother.

During all of the time I have known Willem he has shown himself to be a fine young man, and I feel sure his future conduct will merit his American citizenship if he is allowed to receive the same.

One thing I wish to particularly remind you of, and to ask that you call it to the special attention of the committee, is the services Willem rendered our armed services in Europe. When I first encountered him he was a displaced laborer in Zirl, Austria, although little more than a boy. I was serving as platoon sergeant with the One Hundred Third Infantry Division, Three Hundred Twenty-eighth Combat Engineer Battalion, Company C. Willem rendered us invaluable service in acting as an interpreter in connection with questioning prisoners, but his most valuable contribution was his assistance in locating mine fields and ammunition dumps, and he undoubtedly was directly instrumental in saving the lives of American soldiers; certainly this should be given especial weight by the committee, and by the Congress in the consideration of your bill.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES L. LOONEY.

ST. PETERS EPISCOPAL CHURCH,
Rome, Ga., May 18, 1951.

Hon. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LANHAM: I would like to express myself in behalf of Willem Smits whose case is covered in H. R. 982, introduced by you.

This young man spoke to a group of men at our church recently and all of us were impressed with his worth. His association with people of integrity and impeccable character in this community is indicative of the regard in which he is held generally.

I have talked with several people who are associated with him in his daily work and they speak enthusiastically of his industry.

It seems to me that good citizens can be built from this type of individual, and if the expression of my knowledge of Smits can be of any value you may feel free to so reveal it when his request comes before the Judiciary Committee.

With every good wish to you, I am,

Sincerely yours,

W. RUSSELL DANIEL.

ROME, GA., *May 10, 1951.*

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my desire to make a recommendation as to the character and citizenship of Willem Smits, a Dutch national, who has resided in Rome, Ga., for the past few years.

My association with Mr. Smits has come through my position as executive secretary of the Rome chapter of the American Red Cross and through my work in civic affairs. Mr. Smits was sent to the national aquatic school of the American Red Cross at chapter expense in 1949 where he became a qualified instructor in lifesaving and water safety. At the aquatic school he not only qualified as an instructor but had excellent recommendations for citizenship at the school. Since that time he has taught life-saving classes for the Rome chapter without pay and has been most conscientious and loyal to our chapter.

I have had opportunity to hear Mr. Smits address civic clubs and through informal conversation I have found him proud of his opportunity to be in the United States and at the same time grateful for the advantages of a free and democratic country.

Through a casual suggestion, I assisted him in making a contact with the Anchor Rome Mills, where he was given employment and I have frequently inquired as to his efficiency and cooperation on the job. This I have found to be always commendable.

Because Mr. Smits was so young when he came to Rome, Ga., many of our leading citizens have maintained a keen interest in him. For that reason I believe that he has made a worth-while contribution to our community and is a firm believer in the ideals of our country.

SADYE I. LANGSTON
Mrs. Warren R. Langston.

ANCHOR ROME MILLS, INC.,
Rome, Ga., May 11, 1951.

HON. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LANHAM: I am writing you in behalf of William Smits, who works at this plant, and whose case, I think, is due special consideration.

Willie is one of the finest boys whom I have known in a long time, a willing worker and very easily trained. We are training him on a professional job and I think he will make as good an American citizen as we have in the country today. His influence is so very good for the boys around him who have never had to live under a different form of government.

I am not writing this letter because we are in such urgent need of any particular individual here at this plant—it is because I want to see this boy have a chance to make good in this country. Regardless of how tough a job he is assigned to, he never complains or shirks his duty, and anything you can do to help this boy become naturalized will be a great favor, not only to him but this community.

I will appreciate it if you will pass copy of this letter on to the Committee on the Judiciary to whom bill H. R. 982, introduced by you on January 4, 1951, was referred.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely yours,

L. H. RICE, *General Manager.*

ROME JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
Rome, Ga., May 5, 1951.

Hon. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LANHAM: It has come to my attention that you have introduced a bill in Congress, H. R. 982, to enable Willem Smits to acquire American citizenship, and from my information this is a very meritorious case. A number of our most representative and responsible local citizens have spoken to me of this young man in the highest terms, and I know of some of his community services since he has been in Rome.

I know there are a large number of similar bills pending, with natural varying degrees of merit, but I feel sure that this young man's general character and his conduct since being in this country warrant the positive conclusion that he would make a good citizen, and I hope that favorable action will be taken on your bill. If you feel that this letter will be of any benefit to the Judiciary Committee, please feel free to submit it, or to use it in any way it might be of help in this case.

With very best personal regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

H. E. NICHOLS,
Judge, Superior Court, Floyd County, Ga.

May 4, 1951.

Hon. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LANHAM. A number of our best local citizens have discussed with me the case of Willem Smits, and have told me of your pending bill, H. R. 982, as to his acquiring citizenship.

It was thought that a letter from local law-enforcement officers of this city, in which he has been living, might be of interest to the committee which is to pass on this bill.

I am glad to tell you that, according to my information, his conduct since being n Rome has been only such as would draw praise from any law-enforcement officer. His reputation for good character is of the best, according to those who know him, and his community services since he has been here have been many. Also, his employer speaks highly of him.

Every indication is that this boy will make a good citizen of this country and of this community, and if this letter will be of any assistance to you in enabling him to remain in this country, please use it as you think best.

Sincerely yours,

SMITH HORTON, *Chief.*

ROME GA., *May 2, 1951.*

Hon. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LANHAM: Several people have talked with me about your pending bill, H. R. 982, to assist Willem Smits to become an American citizen, and felt that some comment from law-enforcement officers in the community in which he has been living might be of interest to the committee considering this bill. From my information this boy's character has been of the best since being in this country, and there has certainly been nothing in his conduct since being in Rome to cause any complaint to or by any law-enforcement officer. This boy's record seems to more than justify his realizing his ambition to become a citizen of this country, and, having put in my 30 years in the Navy, I am positive he would not have been given an honorable discharge and held qualified for reenlistment upon clearing his citizenship status under the circumstances of his case unless he had shown himself to be of the highest general character, and had a good service record

Should you think the committee, or others, might be interested in this letter please use it as you see fit.

Sincerely yours,

D. G. JOHNSON,
Sheriff, Floyd County, Ga.

CITY COURT OF FLOYD COUNTY,
Rome, Ga., May 3, 1951.

Hon. HENDERSON L. LANHAM,
House Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LANHAM: I have learned of your pending bill, H. R. 982, for the assistance of Willem Smits in acquiring citizenship, and I should like to tell you that some of our very best local citizens are deeply interested in this boy's case. I have discussed this matter with a number of our people for whose judgment I have the utmost respect, and I do not believe any person who has gained the confidence and liking of such people could fail to make a good citizen of this country. Also, I believe his record since being here justifies the definite assumption that his future conduct will reflect only credit upon him, and merit his becoming an American citizen.

Knowing of the number of such bills pending in Congress, I thought perhaps the Judiciary Committee might be interested in what the local community in which the person involved lived felt about the case; and, if so and you wish to, you may freely pass this letter on to the committee, or use it otherwise if it might be beneficial.

With personal regards, I am,

Sincerely,

JAS. F. KELLY,
Judge, City Court, Floyd County, Ga.

The committee, after consideration of all the facts in the case, is of the opinion that the bill (H. R. 982) should be enacted.

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